



50 Years of
Building
Strength
and
Resilience...
Together



ANNUAL
REPORT

22
23

nellies.org

Land Acknowledgement

Nellie's acknowledges our organization is situated in Tkarón:to (Ta-kar-on-toe) which is located on the traditional lands of the Mississauga (Missi-Sog-A), the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-nah-bay), the Haudenosaunee (Ho-deh-no-show-nee), the Chippewa (Chi-puh-waa), the Huron (Hur-on), and many other Indigenous Peoples.

Colonialism is an ongoing process, and members of Indigenous communities all over Canada have been carrying the burden of this trauma for generations. Reconciliation cannot be achieved if we don't first prioritize understanding the truth. Moving forward requires determining what place

we occupy in the history and future of this land. How do we participate in colonialism, and what can we do to ensure (re)conciliation? While many of us are settlers, it is important to recognize that not all those who live here chose to settle here. For that reason, we respect that some people may not be comfortable adhering to this term.

Tkarón:to (Ta-kar-on-toe) is a Mohawk word meaning 'the place in the water where the trees are standing.' We now stand where, for thousands of years, many languages were spoken, and alliances and decisions were made. Our fight for diversity and equity must include Indigenous Peoples. We must reimagine the narrative of Turtle Island together.

About Us

Since 1973, Nellie's has been providing shelter and support to all women and their children fleeing violence, intimate partner abuse, trauma and homelessness. Nellie's is a community-based feminist organization which operates within an anti-racist and anti-oppression framework. We are committed to social change through education and advocacy, to achieve social justice for all women and their children.



Message from Executive Director Jyoti Singh



This year marks 50 years since Nellie's first opened its doors. Over those five decades, we've primarily been known for the shelter and support we provide to women and their children fleeing violence, trauma, and homelessness — and while these

crisis services will always be a core priority, we're also turning our attention toward innovative violence prevention programs with the goal of creating a future free of gender-based violence.

During the pandemic, we chose to propel forwards and expand our efforts and our team, realizing it is the time for prevention and empowerment, not just for reaction. And, we were honoured to showcase our efforts on an international stage at the 2023 NGO CSW67 Forum in New York City, an event that runs in parallel to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. (Read more about this on page 10.)

We also recently marked our one-year anniversary operating in our new shelter building. We went from an 8,900 sq. ft. shelter that had only nine bedrooms for 36 beds, to a 21,800 sq. ft. building with 22 bedrooms for up to 38 beds. More than just more bedrooms, the new shelter gives us more program space, more living space, more dining space, more play space for kids, more quiet space, and more space for our staff to work together on new and innovative approaches to trauma support and violence prevention.

As we head into the next 50 years at Nellie's, the excitement that I feel for the future is not so much about the work that we're doing today, but it's the platform that has been given to us that we get to jump off of.

But as proud as I am to lead Nellie's, it's bittersweet. Nellie's was established to address a gap in service and to address a need. Unfortunately, although we've been addressing that need, it still hasn't decreased — in fact, the pandemic has made us realize that if anything, the need is increasing. That's why our focus on prevention is now more important than ever.

Thank you to our staff for dedicating yourself to the women and their children who need us, to our volunteers for passionately devoting your time and energy, to our neighbours and community partners for always welcoming and supporting us, to our Board who has worked tirelessly to guide us with their unwavering leadership, and to the women and their children who continue to put their trust in us every day.

Finally, thank you to our community funding partners and to every one of our donors for standing with us. Our 50th anniversary is truly a celebration of the strength and resilience of the women and their children who come to Nellie's every year, and it's thanks to your support that we will continue to empower and support them as we work toward a world without gender-based violence.

Jyoti Singh, Executive Director



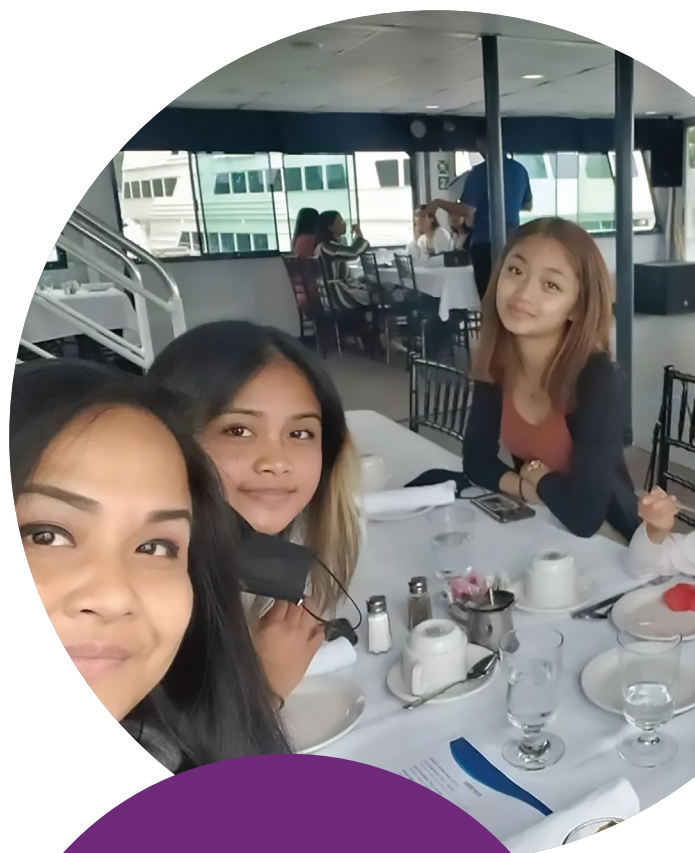
Thanks to Nellie's, I'm not the same person I was before

In August 2003, 16-year-old Sheena Mallari and her newborn daughter Rosalyn arrived at Nellie's following an abusive situation between Sheena and her partner. A week and a half later, on the eve of Sheena's 17th birthday, the Children's Aid Society removed Rosalyn from Sheena's care, declaring her an unfit mother. Rosalyn was less than a month old.

"The staff at Nellie's were always there for me, no matter what happened. They always believed in me," says Sheena. Over the next six months, Sheena enrolled in high school classes, worked part-time, and with the help of the Nellie's team, managed to get her daughter back full-time. A year later, Sheena graduated high school.

"I didn't want to be a statistic. I knew that I was a minority, a young mother, and I was living in a shelter," explains Sheena. "I had to keep looking forward — cut the noise, focus on myself, and focus on my daughter."

During the year that she lived at the shelter, Nellie's staff also helped Sheena navigate the court system not only to restore her daughter back to her care, but also to arrange anger management programs and couples counselling for her and her partner. With the support of Nellie's, Sheena and her partner were able to reconcile, and are still together today. "Thanks to Nellie's, I'm not the same person I was before. I'm not afraid to speak my mind to my partner anymore. I'm not scared," says Sheena.



"I had to keep
looking forward —
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Today, the couple have three children: 20-year-old Rosalyn, 17-year-old Sherlyn, and 7-year-old Serafina. Rosalyn is studying criminology at Wilfrid Laurier University, while Sherlyn is in Grade 12 with dreams of becoming a teacher. Serafina is in Grade 3, and like most kids her age, she is obsessed with Roblox. Sheena has had a successful career in accounts payable, and currently works for a global chemical distribution company.

“Nellie’s helps you build a proper foundation of where you want to be in life,” says Sheena. “I’d

always been dependent on other people, and they’d always put me down. And the only place that didn’t, was Nellie’s.”

When it comes to her history with her partner, Sheena is an open book with her older daughters. “I wanted them to know what we went through. I needed them to know,” she says. “Because I don’t want them to face what I did. I want them to have better. And I want them to know that there’s somewhere they can go in Toronto, if they ever need it.”



50 years of Nellie's

Fifty years ago, a group of women activists realized that in the city of Toronto there were only 40 beds available for homeless women and over 400 beds for homeless men. Moved to action by this inequality, Nellie's was founded in 1973 — and it was named after pioneer feminist, Nellie McClung (who was one of five women who challenged the Canadian government in the Supreme Court of Canada to have women declared persons under the law).



Nellie's opens its doors with a 16-bed shelter on Broadview Ave. While initially established for young homeless women dealing with teenage pregnancy, suicide, self-harm, crime, prostitution, ill-health and abuse, staff began to notice that most of the women accessing Nellie's were middle-aged and older women fleeing domestic violence.

Nellie's purchases the beautiful historic residential building that became home for more than four decades. Over the years, in response to the overwhelming need, Nellie's increased its occupancy rate to 36 beds and made the main focus of the organization disrupting violence against women and their children.

Nellie's opens its Community Support and Outreach office on Queen St. E. Here we provided programming, transitional housing support, a food bank, and more to women and their children who had moved out of the shelter and those who lived in our community at risk of homelessness.



1973

1978

2002



Thanks to a generous grant from La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso, Nellie's launches a children's program to address the wide range of issues facing children living at the shelter, while also providing them with a safe space to play, explore, and laugh. Two years later, an additional grant allowed Nellie's to expand the program to also focus on supporting teens living in our shelter.



Nellie's secures a substantial government investment for the purchase of a new shelter building and begins raising capital to complete the necessary renovations.

Nellie's moves to the stunning three-storey Victorian building we now call home. Our new shelter has capacity for up to 38 beds across 22 bedrooms (an increase from 36 beds across 9 rooms in the old building), giving family units some privacy, and ample space to provide supportive programs and services. The move closed the Community Support and Outreach office on Queen St., and in 2023 we opened a new office on Cosburn Ave. in East York to offer these services.



Nellie's gains ground with empowerment self-defense work at the 2023 NGO CSW67 Forum in New York City, an event that runs in parallel to the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

2017

2019

2022

2023



Disrupting the cycle of violence through prevention programs

Breaking the cycle of violence by focusing on empowerment and prevention is an essential focus for Nellie's as we move into our next 50 years. Not only are we supporting women when they experience violence, but we are now also acting preventatively in order to fight for a better future.

Last year, Nellie's staff were trained to integrate a powerful empowerment self-defense (ESD) program into our support programs for women, and we became the first gender-based violence organization in Canada to implement the world-renowned anti-bullying program aimed at children, Rock and Water.

For both our ESD and Rock and Water programs, the approach is very different from the traditional model for self-defense. The former provides training on proactively preventing, responding and healing from traumatic events, whereas the latter teaches kids through a series of exercises and games about setting their own boundaries, making independent decisions, using communication, and respecting others' limits. ESD has since also been adapted into a community workshop. In the first four months of running our prevention programs, Nellie's taught a total of 297 unique participants at the shelter and in the community.

"We're empowering women to really use their voice and set boundaries," explains Ariana Gomes, violence prevention education manager at Nellie's, adding that we teach participants that "no is a complete sentence" while also

showing them a range of techniques and methods to de-escalate and leave a situation as quickly as possible. "Through feedback forms, we're constantly hearing that our participants feel empowered by learning how to use their voice to express what they need and want."

"Everyone deserves the opportunity to feel empowered and equipped to defend themselves."

The requests for community ESD workshops have been so high over the past few months that two more instructors have been trained to meet the growing demand. "It's really been taking off," says Ariana. "The first year was a lot of outreach, and working with the community to see what their needs are and how we can best support everyone."

Now community organizations are reaching out directly to us — there's a lot of interest." From middle schools and high schools, to youth and women-focused community organizations, it's thanks to your continued support that we're able to spread this crucial programming throughout our community.

"It's essential training," says Ariana. "Everyone deserves the opportunity to feel empowered and equipped to defend themselves."



Rock and Water in schools

Rock and Water has already made an incredible impact on the children living at Nellie's and now, these powerful anti-bullying techniques are spreading to children beyond our walls with an 8-week pilot program run by Nellie's staff in a Grade 4/5 class in a school in Brampton.

We started with these students because their teachers had identified that due to the pandemic, they were really struggling with their interpersonal skills. “They were playing really rough, they weren’t listening to each other, and they were constantly getting hurt,” explains Ariana Gomes, violence prevention education manager at Nellie's. “They weren’t able to navigate their own conflicts anymore because they’d been so separated from each other. And through Rock and Water, we could re-empower and reconnect them with their voice and with their boundaries. It’s important to teach this from a young age.”

The program is play-based, filled with games, activities, and group discussions. Using giraffe and wolf imagery, the group starts by discussing

each animal’s positive and negative attributes. For example, a giraffe can use its height to oversee an entire situation, but they’re also a solitary creature. And while a wolf is quick to bite and bark, they also always support their pack. The students are prompted to think about balancing their giraffe and wolf characteristics, and which animal they want to emulate in a given situation.

“There are a lot of barriers to leaving abusive situations, so a lot of folks may be experiencing abuse but may not have the opportunity to leave,” explains Ariana, adding that several other schools have since expressed an interest in Rock and Water. “That’s why it’s important to be holistic in our outreach, because we don’t want to have assumptions or biases of who’s experiencing abuse and who isn’t.”

“There are a lot of barriers to leaving abusive situations, so a lot of folks may be experiencing abuse but may not have the opportunity to leave.”

Nellie's at the UN

In March 2023, Nellie's was invited to showcase our empowerment self-defense work at the 2023 NGO CSW67 Forum (NGO Committee of the Status of Women) in New York City, an event that runs in parallel to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. "It was an amazing opportunity, and such an incredible honour, to represent Nellie's on the world stage," says executive director Jyoti Singh.

"For many years, Nellie's has been known foremost as a crisis organization for women escaping violence, but it's our efforts in teaching empowerment self-defense that will help us become a leader in stemming the flow of violence on a systemic level," says Jyoti.

The forum, which was attended by 15,000 people from 139 different countries, consists of hundreds of events throughout a two-week period. In our presentation, we shared how shifting our focus from reaction to prevention is crucial to ending gender-based violence and how it has allowed us to discover the role that empowerment self-defense can play in helping women achieve transformative justice.

"I believe we're going to change lives with this program. I believe we're going to save lives with this program."

For so many women who have been victims of violence, it can be impossible to attain restorative justice through traditional methods, such as mediation. For women who literally cannot be in the same room with their offender because that person tried to kill them, how do you restore the harm? How do you restore that sense of peace?

This is where empowerment self-defense comes in. These training sessions don't only teach women how to protect themselves from violence, but they also teach them how to tap into the power within to achieve their own transformative justice.

"I believe we're going to change lives with this program. I believe we're going to save lives with this program," says Jyoti.

2022/2023 housing and shelter stats

Nellie's has a mandate to help all women and their children, regardless of why they are homeless. Each comes to us with different experiences and needs. In 2022/2023, a total of 81 women stayed at Nellie's, and 104 women received housing support.

44	women fled violence/intimate partner abuse
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51	single women arrived at Nellie's
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30	families (women with children) arrived at Nellie's
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61	children (ages 0-17) lived at Nellie's
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4	months is the average length of stay at Nellie's
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1	baby was born at Nellie's
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104	women received housing support
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47	housing help drop-ins
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4	housing help drop-in locations
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73	women attended housing help workshops
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8	community partnerships developed
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177	participants registered in our food program
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903	food bags given out
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61	participants registered in Nellie's Active Living Program for Seniors
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207	participants registered in Toronto Women in Action (TWA)
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33	TWA workshops run
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Thank You to our Donors

We are eternally grateful for our amazing community of generous donors. It's because of you that we can welcome women and their children impacted by abuse, trauma and homelessness as they take the steps toward the next chapter of their lives. Thanks to your continued support, we are leading change to stem the flow of violence at a systemic level.

Every person that comes to Nellie's counts on us to be there for them, and we thank every corporation, foundation, community member and individual supporter who has helped us do just that.

Thank you to the continued support of the **Bickle-Wilder Foundation**, the **Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation**, the **Dawn Tattle Family Foundation**, the **Dawson Family Sharing Foundation**, **La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso**, the **McLean Foundation**, the **Ontario Realtors Care Foundation**, **Greater Toronto Apartment Association Charitable Foundation**, and the **Tippet Foundation** for your generous financial support.

Thank you also to our incredible in-kind donors, who helped us provide Nellie's residents with everyday items such as toiletries, as well as back-to-school necessities and holiday gifts. We're forever grateful for the support of **Joy in a Box**, **One Billion Rising**, **One Fire Movement**, **Rotary Club Toronto East**, and **Rotary Club of Toronto Eglinton**, who also supported Rock and Water with a financial gift.

We also want to recognize the important support of our bequest donors, whose legacy giving helped to ensure that Nellie's is able to continue our important work. Thank you to the estates of **Helen Allen Stacey**, **Ruth Shuster** and **Ethel Harris**.

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE

Dana Rose Granofsky, Co-chair

Donnalea Sparling, Co-chair

Nancy Mrazek, Treasurer

Erin Pollon, Secretary

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Maria Belfon

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Jeboah Miranda

Sushma Narisetty

Danijela Obradovic

Lindsey Walton

Dale Yurka

Neda Zanjani

Senior Management Team

Jyoti Singh, Executive Director

Toyin Bere, HR Coordinator

Ingrid Graham, Director of Development

Jiin Yiong, Director of Programs and Services

Managers & Supervisors

Margaret Bilson, Housing Supervisor

Maureen Caines-Comrie, Shelter Program Supervisor

Candice Cosbert, Shelter Direct Service Supervisor

Ariana Gomes, Violence Prevention Education Manager

Thank you to our Board

We are extremely grateful to our Board of Directors for continually rising to the challenge to better respond to today's realities and tomorrow's needs. We are so fortunate to have their unwavering leadership to guide us.

In 2022/2023 we welcomed three new board members. Each brings a wealth of experience and expertise to Nellie's.

Maria Belfon is a family lawyer who frequently works with women in domestic violence cases. "I wanted to be a part of Nellie's so that I could do work in this area on a community level. It's amazing to be a part of the strategic planning process for Nellie's future, overseeing how a non-profit is run, and making a difference in our community."

Jeboah Miranda is a keynote speaker and founder of the Jeboah Miranda Foundation, which helps women ages 16-24 build their mental grit through programs and technology. "I like that Nellie's focuses on women and children, and not just from an operational standpoint. The advocacy work is really important to me."

Neda Zanjani is the Head of Business Management, Wealth and Personal Banking at HSBC Bank Canada, and immigrated to Canada when she was 11 years old. "I know exactly what it feels like to come into a different country and start from scratch. I would love to have an impact on these women who are in need of support or guidance."

This year we will also be saying goodbye to six departing board members. Thank you to all of these incredible women for their dedication to Nellie's.

Co-chair **Donnalea Sparling** started at Nellie's as a community volunteer on the Fund Development Committee, and has completed two 3-year terms on the board. She is a long-time advocate for women and girls globally and she brings a passion to support women to rebuild their lives. "It is clear that Nellie's

is unwavering in its commitment to those we serve. Our culture of resiliency and inclusion has never been stronger."

Co-chair **Dana Rose Granofsky** also volunteered on our Fund Development Committee before serving two 3-year terms on our Board of Directors. Dana played a key role in guiding Nellie's through a number of major changes, primarily the purchase, renovation and move to our new shelter. "Being a part of ushering in this evolution for Nellie's and seeing the final results come to life is something I'm really proud of."

Erin Pollon has completed three 2-year terms on our board. Along with being a part of the strategic planning committee, Erin was largely involved in arranging the sale of our old shelter. "Selling it during the pandemic was really an all-hands on deck situation. It was such a relief when the shelter was sold."

Dale Yurka started volunteering at Nellie's in 2014, and was a community member on the Social Justice and Fund Development Committees before serving two 3-year terms on our board. "Nellie's is a dynamic and progressive organization that provides not only hands-on help to women and children in need, but it's a forward-thinking organization that's looking to the root causes of the issues that these women are facing and trying to make a difference."

Sushma Narisetty is a professional engineer and dedicated community volunteer. **Danijela Obradovic** is a corporate governance lawyer who is passionate about helping to create environments in which women and their children can thrive. Thank you both for your time and service to Nellie's.

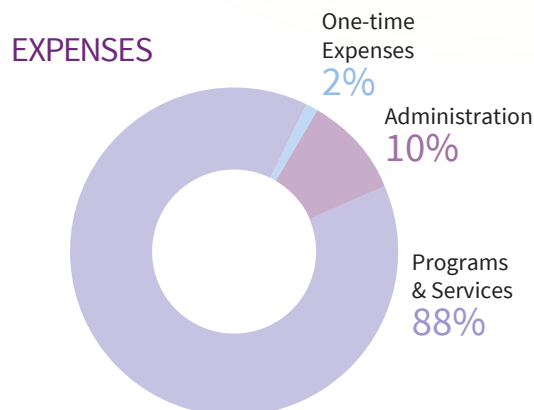
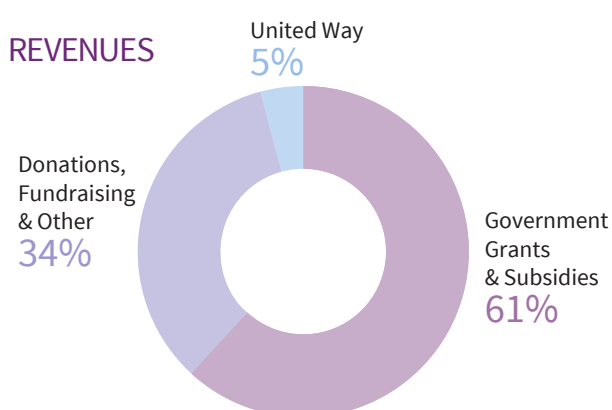


Financial Report

Year End March 31, 2023

REVENUE	2023	2022
Government grants	\$1,859,262	\$1,452,731
MCCSS one-time pandemic relief funding	94,531	832,867
City of Toronto – per diem	323,861	230,023
City of Toronto – personal needs allowance	13,311	29,962
City of Toronto – other employment supports	19,865	32,434
City of Toronto – infection protection & control	42,000	-
United Way Funding	208,608	208,608
Donations and Fundraising	982,149	1,104,541
Bequests	275,000	154,752
Rental, Interest and other	109,341	45,324
	\$3,927,928	\$4,091,242
EXPENSES (Schedule A of our Audited Financial Report)		
Property	\$342,410	\$279,392
Administration	341,425	348,076
Staffing	2,183,731	2,038,268
Clients	287,142	273,827
One-time expenses including accommodation	49,748	852,294
	\$3,204,456	\$3,791,857
Excess of revenue over expenses from operations	\$723,472	\$299,385
Income from amortization of deferred capital contributions	379,355	31,103
Amortization of capital assets	(384,529)	(65,805)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses from capital assets	(5,174)	(34,702)
Outlays for Mary Prichard Fund	—	(750)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses for Mary Prichard Fund	—	(750)
Gain on sale of Broadview Shelter site	—	2,310,814
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	\$ 718,298	\$2,574,747

See full Audited Financial Statements, including notes at nellies.org



Vision for Tomorrow

If the pandemic has highlighted anything, it's that gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, and violence against women is endemic in our society. The need for organizations like Nellie's is as significant today as it was when we first opened our doors 50 years ago. But while Nellie's has long been known as a crisis organization for women escaping violence, we're also answering the call to disrupt the cycle of violence by focusing on empowerment and prevention.

Over our first five decades, our foundation has been built on supporting and empowering the women and their children who need us, both within and beyond our walls. Now, looking ahead to the next 50 years, we will simultaneously strengthen our core services while taking concrete action to change the environment. We will continue to expand our efforts to disrupt the cycle of violence by developing, promoting, and implementing Rock and Water and Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD) both in our shelter and out in the community.

We will also concentrate our efforts on initiatives that break cycles of violence on a systems level by continuing to advocate for change and working to influence policy across the city and beyond. Inside our organization, we will continue to foster a healthy, vibrant environment with a stable, skilled, and engaged workforce with a strategy that supports employee recruitment, retention, development, engagement, and well-being.

We're shifting the tide from measuring how many people are coming through our doors, to how we are truly changing the world. The hope is that by the time Nellie's celebrates 100 years, there will be less of a need for us as a crisis organization.

At Nellie's, we are propelling ourselves into the next 50 years with a bold vision: a world free of oppression and violence for all women and children. Thank you for standing strong with us as we continue to build strength and resilience, together.



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Nellie's



Shelter, Education & Advocacy
For All Women and Children